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ABSTRACT

This report reviews basic teacher education programs as presently understood and practiced and extends these formats through transitional forms toward a model teacher preparation program for the future. Basic preparation programs are divided into three categories: traditional, transitional, and modern. Traditional programs are compartmentalized into general studies, subject specialization, and professional sequence. The two major concerns of traditional programs are student teaching and methods. Transitional programs provide up-to-date courses of study and educational experience. Areas of concern include block core or curriculum packages, course proliferation and pilot programs. Should the transitional programs develop fully, modern programs will include a) the functional mixing of theory and practice, b) the organization of study and experience into some logical order, and c) the reorientation of the basic design of the college program to fit student needs. A model modern curriculum resulted from this study. Basic developmental tasks and provisions to provide mastery by the student fall into three areas: a) self realization, b) academic competence, and c) practical expertise. Conclusions indicate that field experience shows promise as playing the role of "integration vitalizer" in mutual interaction with personal and academic development in a modern student-oriented teacher preparation curriculum. (MJM)

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"THE REAL CURRICULUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION"

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August 1, 1969

Introduction

Teacher education programs are presently undergoing rather extensive revision in all parts of our nation. Strong national forces are moving forward with recommendations, guidelines and "working papers" from within established professional organizations.[1] On local fronts federal funding and student and faculty dissatisfaction with traditional systems that fail to meet the growth and sophistication needs of today's schools are pushing forward in myriads of program deviations and experiments.

In the forefront of many of these stirrings lies the new emphasis on the importance of the student field experiences. To illuminate this significance a synopsis of past, present and proposed teacher preparation programs is presented in this article. Here we will review basic formats as presently understood and practiced and extend this thinking through transitional forms toward a model teacher preparation program for the future.

[1]Prominent among such associations are TEPS, NCATE, a revitalized Assn. for Student Teaching and particularly the AACTE as evidenced by their "Standards and Evaluative Criteria for the Accreditation of Teacher Education," AACTE, Washington, D.C., December, 1967.

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I. Basic Patterns Today

Programs known to us today--fall into three major categories: traditional, transitional and modern.

A. Traditional: As a point of departure first consider the widely practiced traditional pattern of teacher education. "Training ingredients" offered in our colleges and universities are served on separate, discreet, compartmentalized platters, usually as a three-course repast labelled, in this order: "general studies", "subject specialization" and "professional sequences".

The general or "liberal education" commonly occurs as that smorgasbord of knowledge, usually doled-out in a mass communicative manner, as required sustenance to all frosh and sophs. These programs presuppose no specialization but in many cases are taught as such by overzealous liberal arts specialists. One can scarcely condemn these experts for attempting to maintain standards of subject matter integrity and to extend to the student mind some of the real impact of their disciplines.

Nevertheless, for many "common students" too hard a line of nutrition does prove most indigestible. Some college instruction, unfortunately, tends to fall back to the other extreme of presenting "watered-down", "busy-work", "orientational" "overviews" attempting to cover an entire discipline in one or two courses. Seldom is the happy medium wherein the correct dimension of "overview" is blended meaningfully with some true student appreciation of the guts of the subjects.

This bookish cafeteria repast labelled "general education" supposedly serves as the exploratory basis from which is to spring for each student his true direction of specialization. Often such "personal discovery" occurs before college entry--but it has been assumed that certainly by

the end of two academic years of "generalizing" the vast majority of students will settle upon the appropriate field of academic specialization for their own individual needs and make-ups. Thus, as early as the freshman year and no later than the junior year a discreet "training ingredient" is "administered" to the student masses.

In academic subject matter programs in college it can be said that the "subject integrity" is usually handled quite adequately. For one thing it doesn't take long for most professors in most academic areas to discover whether any given individual is indeed a serious and promising student of that particular subject. Thus, academic programs of specialization have readily been "baked" into tasty "degree cakes"--frosted to a good-looking competency--and the student product is now possesed of subject fact, concept and applicability for its own sake.

Now there is nothing wrong with this "cake" nor in how it is baked... if this has been the total purpose recognized by the student. It must be made clear, however, that if public school teaching of this subject matter has been a student's goal, the orientation of this knowledge to the efficient instruction of youngsters is by no means assured at this point.

Our traditional answer to this apparent shortcoming has been to provide the junior and senior with a "professional education sequence" which will enable him to rally his "general education" and "special subject knowledge" around the flag of an enlightened pursuit of the art of pedagogy.

First, we have considered it important to provide "foundations" in philosophy, history, sociology and psychology--a kind of bookish, general studies fare within the professional sequence. Thus, such types of courses fall easily into the extreme evils of "too deep" or "two shallow"

previously described as prominent characteristics of the first two years of general studies. We might also add yet another dimension of criticism at the "foundation" course. This point is simply that the associations of concepts to practical educational endeavors are considerably weakened by the absence of youth or field experiences preceding or concurrent to such studies.

"Methods"

To preserve the avowed practicality of professional studies we have been contriving for years to provide suitable "how-to-do-it" courses. We have approached the need from either general or special methods angles --and sometimes from both angles in a number of parallel and integrated formats. Still, no one seems to like how anyone structures or teaches these courses. In fact, many of those who have tried to instruct in methods are themselves among the severest critics.

Truly, the student is hungry to find out "how to teach." "Just tell me how to do it, and I will become a good teacher!" We have come to realize that if instructors of methods make the mistake of telling the student how-to-do-it, more often than not the pathway to the student's personally effective classroom manner will only have acquired a formidable blockade. The other fellow's way or ways simply are not his--nor can they become his!

"Student Teaching"

We throw up our professional hands in disgust and snort: "Well, try it yourself!" Thus, we have the rationale for the traditional "chomping" we have known as "practice teaching". This element, provided it is well administered, has retained its status according to student testimony, as the most useful portion of the professional sequence.[2]

[2]Many unpublished surveys of student's opinions have been and are being conducted, including a continuing effort by this author labelled "Student Teacher Terminal Interviews" (STTI).

Some students even maintain that it is the most enlightening experience of their entire collegiate career!

One service of the student teaching experience has become increasingly significant: the traditional field experience has provided a most valid and vivid portrayal of the preparatory strengths and weaknesses of those traditional morsels of "general studies", "special subject knowledge", "educational foundations" and "teaching methods". On the negative side what greater general condemnation of a preparatory program can result than the words often uttered <u>after</u> student teaching: "Teaching isn't <u>at all</u> what I thought it would be!"

B. <u>Transitional</u>: The restless cries of student teachers and inservice products of the traditional system are beginning to be heeded by educational planners to the extent that a number of "transitional" efforts away from rigid traditionalism toward more effective and up-to-date courses of study and educational experiences are in evidence across the land. As you might expect, some of these trials and probes are ill-advised or tend to be too piecemeal. However, others not only serve to crack the crust of unsatisfactory traditionalism but have proven capable of generating many extensive and successful innovations. One of the keynotes for successful program innovation, even should it be piecemeal to some degree, seems to be the ease with which the innovation is made to "fit" into the context of complete and worthwhile programs that <u>already</u> exist or that <u>could</u> exist.

"Block Core"

One common feature found in college curricula is the <u>block</u> approach. This is to mean that certain sequences of courses of allied work are wrapped into packages, cutely labelled and required of all as a "core" experience or study. Parcels of this nature might relate to theoretical study or practical experience background, but seldom do they attempt to

integrate practical experience with theoretical concepts.

The block idea is neat administratively, can ease advisement of individuals considerably, and can afford a certain measure of either "screening out" or "building confidence" with the student population that originally presents itself. "Core" studies categorize program emphasis by imbuing the sequence with an avowed aim and as an integral phase of a whole program. Professional core blocks sometimes are not well integrated with lead-in or following studies (i.e., "continuity" is faulty) or the core lacks flexibility to meet individual needs.

"Course proliferation"

Another common transitional tactic is the proliferation of courses, required and elective, that pile-into programs (as prerequisites or not) to "raise standards" and "improve sequences". Substitute courses and acceptable cognates are common in such a climate. Again we note a screeming effect on the student population, so that a student tends to acquire the feeling that he is traversing a giant maze replete with spontaneous "gates", dead ends, and sudden turns and detours. His studies begin to lose meaningful correlation, and his final reward seems to lack any real association to the present tasks.

"Pilot programs"

Yet another aspect of "transition" is the pilot program. While complete and comprehensive enough in itself, the typical pilot program is specially designed for a small, select group of students. Very special conditions are prearranged and strictly adhered to. The usual experimental phenomenon called "halo effect" is prominent. Also, few pilots have well-structured evaluative devices accompanying them. Unless followed by sincere and prolonged exposure and eventual assimilation into a bona fide preparation program, pilots' are likely to lie abandoned and prove of little long standing value to real program change.

These and other transitional efforts often lack the persistence and the comprehensiveness of the hoped for college curriculum for the teacher preparation of the future.

C. Modern: Should a significant number of transitional efforts prove successful and blossom into fully matured programs, we can expect to approach a type of preparation which would truly deserve the designation "modern". Whether the needed shift in emphasis comes gradually through transition or more abruptly through some other means, our projected direction seems to include three newer aspects:

1. the complete functional mixing of theory and practice, which we might term simply "integration";

2. the organization of study and experiences into some kind of logical order which we might label "progression";

3. the reorientation of the basic design of the college program to rest squarely on the needs of the students, which we might label "individualization."

We suggest that the concept and implementation of integrating book theory and field-practice be followed faithfully from the freshman year onward well into the inservice and graduate school years. No academicians or professional theorists who profess to contribute their efforts to preparing teachers should be permitted the transgression of this principle. As soon as the actual school classroom reference and/or presence is allowed to fade from significance in any teacher preparation courses the bond of theory to reality so earnestly sought will be broken.

Such a commission might impose an impossible task on the shoulders of the theorists, which may well prompt the appearance of team instruction. That is, a field-oriented staff might be called upon to provide the

relevance to pedagogy of the content and theory concurrent to its "pure" presentation.

Some colleges are recognizing this principle in a general way by proposing earlier field experiences and increased student involvement in classroom reality as the college program progresses--along with a corresponding decline in the amount of formal classwork on campus.

(As one considers this program format, an alternative rises to mind: suppose the inverse pattern were adopted, so that the early college years would be devoted largely to aide and observation experiences with real children in real schools with a gradual increase in formal college classwork and theorizing and a corresponding decrease in field experience time? One suspects that such aspects as career choice and true philosophical understanding might prosper under such an approach!)

Since modern electronics now make available the realism of the classroom through simulation and spontaneous video taping of teaching acts, the study of pupil and teacher behavior and learning problems can be counted on as a new and powerful medium through which theory and practice can be integrated.

As a second major aspect of the modern program, "progression" is a concept which recognizes that experiences, real or abstract, have certain optimum sequences, which can enhance their effectiveness in the program. An organized "order of events" might be prescribed in any particular experiential area. This idea is akin to that which we have ordinarily associated with logical subject matter sequence. However, certain differences (mainly toward more flexibility) might be attached to this application:

1. The sequence would be adapted to the individual <u>needs</u> of <u>a</u> student;
2. The <u>pace</u> at which a sequence was followed would be fitted to the circumstances of the individual case;
3. There would be <u>any number</u> of possible experiential sequences--not just one standard sequences;
4. Each personally prescribed sequence would retain its own <u>integrity</u> as a means--not an end.

"Individualization" This recommended flexibility of organization of experiences tips off the third and final important characteristic of the modern program, namely, the <u>individualization</u> of the program design. As previously noted here, in the past program structure has "stretched" or "flattened" students into its predetermined mold. We suggest that in place of a structure labelled: "general", "special" and "professional" a more functional and flexible format be adopted which includes:

1. theory-practice integration
2. a variety of possible experiential progressions

--and so that the controlling determinant of an individual student's program be <u>his</u> --

3. individual needs and readiness.

The better student teaching programs in the nation have already made strides in orienting and placing students according to their individual needs. While often the sheer weight of numbers has hindered this progress, the very idea of differentiated field assignments is now with us, hopefully to stay. Perhaps this concept can be refined in relation to the field experience and spread to include the <u>entire</u> teacher preparation program!

II. A Model Modern Curriculum:

The student-oriented curriculum for teacher preparation would have to contain certain basic provisions to assure the individualization of the plan. Assuming that each teacher institution is capable of developing the diagnostic procedures to determining the needs and readiness of individual students upon their college entrance, our discussion here moves into consideration of basic developmental tasks and the plans to provide their complete and successful mastery by each student in his own way. Denotation of "tasks" seems to fall easily into three areas: self-realization, academic competence and practical expertise.

A. Self-Realization: Of prime consideration and also the area closest to the student himself is the provision for what we might call his growth to a full realization of his image and role as a successful teacher. While this demand can be met partly through constant, active, direct guidance counseling techniques and partly by the commonly practiced technique of "waiting for the kid to grow up!", there would be some sense in building a progression of integrated experiences that would prompt his growth without "pushing" or "waiting".

The ingredients of such a provision would perhaps lie in stages through which an individual would progress at his own rate. Early manifestations would include such aspects as his "inclinations", his "interests", his "attitudes", and his "aspirations". Initial perceptions of the profession and even such aspects as "hero worship" and the influences of "significant others" would work at this level on his gropings to determine his own destiny.

From this basis more specific and factual elements might "go-to-work" on his early impressions. Aptitude profiles, personality analyses, ability and capacity ratings would influence his sense of direction.

Finally, if his cognitations continued to substantiate his developing direction, we would expect a career conviction, refined perceptions and eventually a professional dedication.

This outlines the "progression" aspect of experiences in this maturation category. Important to design in each case is the "integration" feature, whereby the interaction of field and theory experiences are mutual and concurrent contributors to this kind of introspective growth.

B. Academic Competence: The second major provision would be that of the college classroom to build subject matter competence of a sort that is applicable to public school instruction. This latter phrase is saying that "integration" of field experience and personal committment likewise become a part of the academic provision.

In relation to a "progression" of academic knowledge growth we can again suggest a few stages. Early would come "overviews" and "surveys", and focus on essential factual items and concepts would follow. Experiences would soon probe deeper with such activities as extended reading, thorough discussion, role playing and the understanding of simulated and abstract applications. Late, more sophisticated aspects would include: problem solving, reorganization and, eventually the experience of freedom with a subject area in which creativity would be the keynote.

The scope of this academic preparation would extend from frosh to inservice years; its laboratory would be the public school classroom, as much as the campus class.

C. Practical Expertise: The third essential provision for the student-oriented curriculum would be an integrated program of field experiences designed to help him grow to be a competent classroom practitioner.

In considering "progression", even before college entrance, service to--and experiences with--youth constitute a sound beginning. School visitations of a general nature could be followed by guided observations. Working in a private or public service vein to survey school practices is most helpful in the building of educational understanding. Focus on specific pupil, learning or teaching problems employing a case study technique might follow.

"Rolling-up the sleeves and pitching in", involving the student in or close to the actual instruction in a classroom has levels of committment such as teacher aide work, "episode teaching", and traditional student teaching.

Field experience can be extended into year-long internships, and, indeed, with the proper college-public school partnership, right on into "beginning teaching" and even extend to inservice activities for experienced teachers. These classroom involvement steps constitute the ingredients of our modern trend toward "staff differentiation", a much broader and more complex concept than our traditional "practice teaching experience."

III. Summary: It should be made clear that these tasks and provisions for the student-oriented curriculum are not to be confined by time, by place nor by instructional staff in the compartmental manner of our present day "general", "special" and "professional" divisions.

Time wise all of the tasks and provisions are to be active throughout the individual student's growth, be it for four or fourteen years duration.

Placewise all of the tasks and provisions will operate from time-to-time in public schools, in community sites and on the college campus.

Each task and its provisions will entail the combined attention, planning and instruction of general, special and field staff members in a harmonious team effort focusing on the student's personal needs. The video recorder can now bring the public school picture to the general and special staff on campus where hopefully the field staff will be included in the dialogue pertaining to specific student performances and to general college curriculum development.

A. Functioning of the Model Curriculum: To elaborate a step further on the plan outlined above, we consider some practical measures that would help to guide the actual functioning and implementation of a modern student-oriented teacher preparation program:

1. Scope: An opening question might be raised in regard to the basic "student need" criterion: "What appears to be the scope of student needs as we presently know them?" Without bogging down in a compendium of individual case studies, we can receive some indication of this need-extent by categorizing groups.

None of these groups are really "new" to us. We are well acquainted with the stretching and straining of our traditional system as it attempts to adjust present program criteria to those students who say:

a. "I want to try teaching to see if I like it."
b. "I have to earn a living somehow, so I'll teach."
c. "I am not too happy in my present line of work; I would like to switch to teaching."
d. "I've been around kids alot; I think I'd like being a teacher."
e. "I come from a whole family of educators; I expect to join ranks."
f. "I've always wanted to be a teacher--no question in my mind!"
g. "I've taught on temporary certification for several years; I wish to become fully certified."
h. "Education is definitely going to be my career--teaching for a few years and eventually work into a position of leadership in education."

Is it possible that any single type of curriculum plan can cope with such a wide variety of motivations and circumstances? Putting aside our personal prejudices on who ought to teach and why they ought to teach; ignoring the set patterns of past and present programs; and making a direct, frontal attack on the problem of meeting these variegated requests at a realistic, pragmatic level -- this kind of approach leads to the genuine individualized teacher preparation curriculum. We then soon turn our efforts toward shaping the integration of theory and practice and the progression of experience to suit each of these categorical groups, allowing special deviations of program within each group to suit the individual.

2. Sequence: How do we, as program planners, cope with the developmental needs of each student by providing some kind of clearly defined and functional progression of experiences?

I suggest that the interdepartmental advisory committee (i.e. general educator, subject matter specialist and field experience consultant--in some cases supported by public school representatives--) get to know individual students in regard to background, aspirations, and potential. This advisement mission would be conducted to the extent there would be a mutually agreed-upon "curriculum" of various prescribed experiences in each of the "provisional areas" (i.e. "self-realization", "academic competence" and "practical expertise"). Each of these areas would consist of listings of experiences through which the individual student would be classified as to his present position on each continum. Each student would be designated as having "accomplished satisfactorily" or "not accomplished" certain developmental tasks through integrated experiences.

For example, should Student A be revealed through personal and record contact and study as an individual who: "personally" was at the "con-

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viction" level; who was past beginning to extend his "reading" in his chosen subject specialty; and who had conducted "guided observations" --all of these experiences recognized as "accomplished"--he could then be "plugged-into" a "next experience" that might be characterized by a dedicated committment to education involving discussions of his subject matter, and its relationship to real school through the conduct of a survey study. (This assumes that the suggested sequences of experiences in Figure A ... were in effect.) It could be that Student A, while at the "conviction level" in personal committment for him had not yet experienced the searching of his make-up in regard to a "personality analysis." This "stage" in his self-realization pattern would simply be adjusted as to sequence along with any omissions on any of the three scales. Thus, we would see the creation of personalized programs.

Or Student B might be at the "inclination" level of self-realization; might be an active "problem solver" in his subject area; and might have completed some "general school visitations." It might not be proper, even so, to conclude that he would proceed (on such a set scale as figure A) to attitudinal searching while engrossed in re-organizing known subject material based on guided observations in the field. It would have to be ascertained that previous, supposedly "accomplished" experiences in all categories had carried with them the impact of "integration"--that is, associated theory and practice. Thus, if Student B still had to relate his "subject matter facts" to field circumstances in some light, it would be necessary to re-program his factual knowledge level to some extent -- probably to a degree mutually agreed upon by the special subject and field consultant staff members, even though on a "set scale" it would appear that he had

"accomplished" factual learning.

Most cases would not follow such erratic designs as portrayed in the circumstances of Students A and B, since transfer or special level students would not be as numerous as students who begin the program at "ground zero" in all three phases. Still it cannot be assumed that those starting off equally will remain so -- since a "personal pacing" is encouraged. Thus annual review of program "progress" and "integration" would be necessary for all.

B. Programming: This complex "mixing process" which constantly or at least periodically considers a student"s "experience status": (a) in terms of "experience progressions", (b) in terms of "integrated theory and practice" and (c) in terms of "individually required" developmental tasks -- might be defined as the necessary programming of personal, academic and field events in order to best prepare the particular student to achieve:

1. a complete, self-realization within the teaching role;
2. a competent academic knowledge and understanding appropriate to public school instruction;
3. a proven effectiveness as a classroom practitioner and competent educator.

In regard to "integration" there would have to be assurances that "personal", "academic" and "field" elements were developing concurrently and of mutual assistance.

In regard to "progression" we mean that within each element (i.e. "personal", "academic" and "field"), whatever the personalized sequence of experiences might be, a steady forward thrust is maintained.

Finally, the basic determinant, "individualization", dictates that each student move forward on all fronts (i.e. "personal", "academic" and "field") in terms of his own best-fitted pattern.

C. Conclusions: In reconsidering the main points brought forth in this article, it is apparent that the emerging role of the student field experiences is highly significant to the teacher preparation program.

Field experience has influenced <u>traditional</u> patterns on the grounds of the asserted usefulness and realism of student teaching.

Transitional formats have further enhanced the power of field experiences through some most exciting and progressive pilot experiments, through extension of traditional student teaching programs, and through the creation of new clinical approaches such as micro-teaching.

Finally, the field experience shows promise as playing the role of "integration vitalizer" in mutual interaction with personal and academic development in a modern student-oriented, teacher preparation curriculum.

FIGURE A

AN ADVANCED MODERN PROGRAM PROPOSAL BASED
ON THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENT

PROGRESSION SEQUENCE

Three integrated, concurrent elements: 4-6 years duration

1. Personal	2. Academic	3. Field
inclinations	overviews	youth contacts
attitudes	surveys	youth service
aspirations	facts	school visits
interests	concepts	guided observations
aptitudes	readings	school surveys
abilities	discussions	case studies
capacities	simulations	aide work
perceptions	problem solving	student teaching
convictions	organization	internship
dedication	creativity	in-service

↓ complete self-realization within the teacher role

↓ competent, related academic understanding

↓ tested as an effective practitioner

"integration"
(theory - practice)

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